

Minutes of the Board of Water Commissioners' Meeting

Monday, November 14, 2011

Present: Commissioners G. Van De Kreeke, R. Haen, and J. Trueblood, Superintendent. Commissioner Stewart was excused due to travel out of the country for work. Mrs. Doris Freye, customer.

The meeting was called to order by G. Van De Kreeke, President, at 4:02 P.M. All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Haen, seconded by Commissioner Van De Kreeke, that the minutes of the September 2011 meeting be approved as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports

Financial reports for September 2011 were reviewed. Commissioner Van De Kreeke motioned, with a second by Commissioner Haen, that the financials be approved as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Operations' Department Report

Superintendent reported that September pumpage decreased 3.5% from 2010. A class from Lakeland College had toured the Plant. The east and west sedimentation basins were cleaned. In addition, confined space training had been conducted by CVMIC. The Commissioners accepted the operations report as presented.

Construction Maintenance Department Report

Superintendent advised that the crew had installed 680' of 12" PVC water main in Eisner Avenue between Hubert Circle and Cty LS. Various fire hydrant repair work had also been completed. The crew had inspected all valve and curb stop boxes in areas of pavement replacement on the City's street reconstruction projects. Dornier Inc. had completed water main installation on S. 13th Street, including private water services, from Kentucky to Broadway Avenue. The crew had also fabricated vent extensions for the south basin to better remove chlorine gas and not just pull hot air out of the top of the room. The Commissioners accepted the construction maintenance report as presented.

Old Business

Old Business Presented By Commissioners

There was none.

Other Old Business

Update Board on intake dive inspection

Superintendent advised that Patrick Murphy and Lake Erie Diving had successfully inspected most of the 36" intake pipeline. The pipeline appears to be in sound condition, with very little sediment; even less than observed in the 30" intake. Either the potassium permanganate feed and/or the higher flow rates are preventing mussels from any significant encroachment into the 36" intake. The inspection was completed using a remote controlled robotic device. Lake Erie Diving observed the chemical feed lines (3) to be anchored at the bottom of the pipeline for most of its extent; however, some distance out, the lines diverged from the bottom into the main area of the pipeline. At this point, Patrick Murphy retrieved the robotic device for fear of entanglement. The diversion of the lines raises some concern about their geometry within the intake cross and bell area, which might possibly contribute to ice buildup. However, removal of the lines is a drastic measure, as they appear to be in sound condition.

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Update Board on water rate study by Baker Tilly

Superintendent advised that the PSC has one rate study ahead of ours, but they should be moving forward soon with the cost of service study. Commissioner Van De Kreeke asked if new rates can be authorized retroactive to Dec. 31, if the PSC does not complete their work before the end of the year. Superintendent will check with the PSC on that possibility.

Update Board on implementation of WI Act 10

Superintendent advised that he has now met with all staff members covered under the current labor agreement to convey some basic information about upcoming changes. Staff members were encouraged to provide ideas about ways to improve the Water Utility. Superintendent felt these meetings were very productive. Superintendent also reported that the President of the local bargaining group had informed him of the group's intent to decertify at the end of the year.

New Business

Business to be presented by Commissioners

There was none.

Other New Business

Discuss and ask Board approval for security system replacement equipment.

Superintendent presented a proposal from Guardian security for a replacement control board, camera, two window switches, and two SIMM modules, at an installed price of \$1,925.00. Commissioner Van De Kreeke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Haen, to accept the proposal. Motion passed unanimously.

Discuss customer complaint about a high water bill due to a leaky toilet

This item was moved forward on the agenda due to the attendance of Mrs. Doris Freye. Superintendent presented Mrs. Freye's account information, which showed typical quarterly usage of 800-900 CF; then in the most recent quarter, her usage increased to 6,700 CF. The Utility notified Mrs. Freye upon noticing this increase. She then responded by contacting a neighbor to help with some basic plumbing work. Mrs. Freye advised that she is hard of hearing and could not hear the toilet leaking. She asked if the high bill due to the leakage could be negotiated in any way. Superintendent stated that Mrs. Freye had promptly attended to the problem, but it appeared the water had gone through the water meter and then into the sanitary sewer system; the City Plumbing Inspector had been contacted to verify the latter. Commissioner Van De Kreeke stated that he had faced a similar situation some years ago, resulting in a water bill approaching \$1,000. Although the Commissioners wanted to do something to help reduce the billing, they felt that it was clear the water had been used, and they could not set a precedent of waiving a bill, because then any customer with a high bill might feel that theirs should also be reduced. Commissioner Van De Kreeke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Haen, that the bill must be maintained as is. Motion passed unanimously.

Discuss and ask Board approval of R.O. transmitting third quarter report to Council

The Commissioners reviewed the quarterly information. Commissioner Haen made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Van De Kreeke, to submit the R.O. to Council. Motion passed unanimously.

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Discuss and ask Board approval for purchase of alum

Superintendent advised the Board of the need for purchase of alum at \$45,835.00 for 100 tons.

Commissioner Van De Kreeke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Haen, to approve the purchase.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discuss and ask Board approval for audit proposal

Superintendent presented a proposal from Baker Tilly for the upcoming audit of 2011 financials at a cost of \$7,550, up from \$7,250 in the previous year. After discussion, Commissioner Haen made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Van De Kreeke, to accept the proposal. Motion passed unanimously

Discuss and ask Board approval of final 2012 Utility budget

Superintendent presented the proposed final budget. Most of the large capital items had been included on the long term capital project list presented earlier in the year. Large water main projects included a feeder main to the proposed Schuchardt development site. Water consumption is expected to remain flat over 2011. An increase in water rates is expected to increase overall water revenues; this is in synch with the long term capital project list, which shows upcoming large capital projects in 2013 and 2014. Rather than a large annual increase, the Utility is attempting to progressively increase rates over time to pay for large capital projects. After discussion, Commissioner Van De Kreeke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Haen, to approve the 2012 budget as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence

There was no additional correspondence.

Approve Vouchers

Motion by Commissioner Van De Kreeke, seconded by Commissioner Haen, that gross payroll of \$133,905.46, and the general vouchers of \$682,382.60 be allowed and approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Personnel

Update Board on operations department staffing and operator vacancy

Superintendent advised Board that advertisements are out for the operations supervisor position. Two new water treatment plant operators will start training in December. Superintendent anticipates creating a second relief operator position in early January. The plant assistant, Mr. Donovan, has announced his retirement effective in May of 2012; Superintendent and the Commissioners expressed appreciation for his many years of service.

Discuss and ask Board approval to move sick hours from third bank into first bank for employee with serious medical condition

Superintendent relayed information about the three banks used to record accrued sick leave for employees. The first two banks are considered active, while sick leave in the third is considered recorded but lapsed. Superintendent explained how this third bank serves to help in case of long term disability or illness and can be used to restore the other banks. Superintendent then requested the Commissioners to approve this transfer in the case of a long-standing employee with a serious medical condition. Commissioner Van De Kreeke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Haen, to restore the lapsed sick leave. Motion passed unanimously.

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Discuss and ask Board approval of the Utility's Employee Handbook

Superintendent presented draft copies of the Handbook, along with a summary of changes, and legal comments. Superintendent stated his goals are to reduce costs overall, improve efficiency, and maintain a competitive benefit package to attract and retain high quality employees. In terms of cost savings, Superintendent explained the following: 1) WI retirement system funding change will reduce costs by \$100,000; this comes out of employees' wage and salary. 2) By the end of 2012, Superintendent estimates overall staffing will be further reduced by one position, reducing costs by approximately \$60,000 per year. 3) Health and dental insurance contributions will be increased to \$80 and \$40 (family and single) per month. 4) Prescription co-pays will increase to \$10 generic, \$30 brand formulary, \$60 brand outside of formulary, and the mail order dosage limit will increase to 90 days.

In terms of benefit changes, Superintendent explained the following: 1) Provide a \$0.15 per hour premium for all employees with a WDNR certification in surface water treatment, and a \$0.10 per hour premium for all employees with a WDNR certification in water distribution. 2) Provide partial tuition reimbursement for relevant coursework of 70% up to \$250 per credit for grade of B and above. 3) Expand comptime bank to 80 hours. 4) Eliminate double time on second day off for operations staff. 5) Change 3 minor holidays into major holidays. 6) Eliminate meal allowance. 7) Change vacation to 4 weeks at 10 years rather than at 12 years.

The Commissioners will review the Handbook for the December Board meeting.

Discuss and ask Board approval to allocate monies for exempt and non-exempt employee salary and wage increases for 2012

Superintendent proposed wage changes based on the average of the 2011 fiscal year and calendar year-to-date annual inflation rate tied into merit based on written performance evaluations. After discussion, the Commissioners determined to take up the issues at the December Board meeting.

The meeting did not go into closed session.

Other Matters

There were no other matters discussed.

December Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting will be on Monday, December 12, 2011, at 4:00 p.m. in the Utility conference room.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM on a motion by Commissioner Van De Kreeke, seconded by Commissioner Haen. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes taken by:
Superintendent
Joe R. Trueblood

Raymond W. Haen, Secretary